

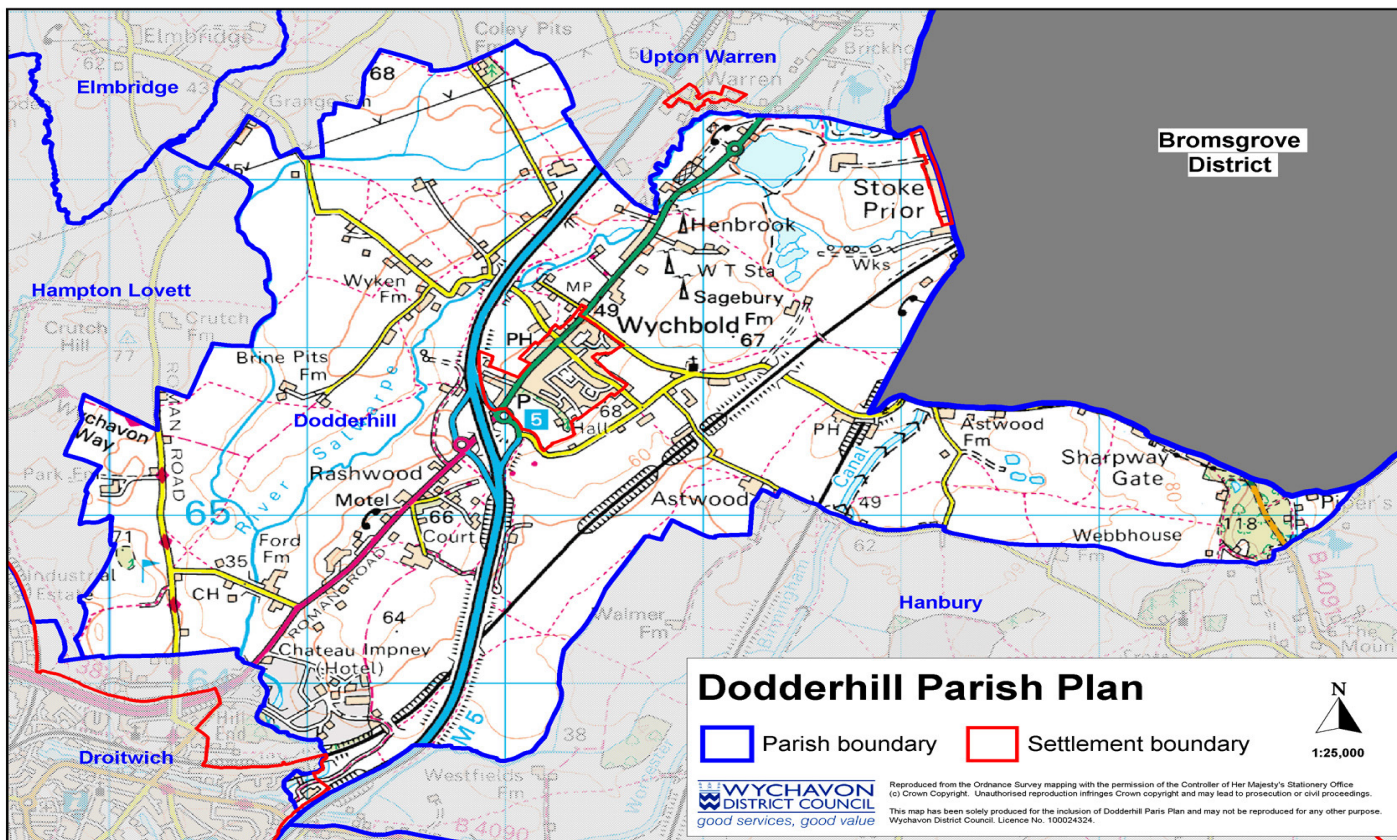
Dodderhill Parish Plan



A vision for the future

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Thanks to Awards for All, Community Champions, Karen Humphries of Community First, DEFRA, Dodderhill Parish Council and Frank Picken



To obtain more information about the Dodderhill Parish Survey Project or on the archaeology and history of Dodderhill Parish, contact the Project Co-ordinator Chris Bowers on 01905 776870.

The Dodderhill Parish Survey Project has published two booklets of Parish Notes, which are available at a very small cost

To volunteer to join/organise a club/organisation, please contact:

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Introduction

Welcome to this, the first Parish Plan for Dodderhill. We trust that this reflects all that is currently good about the Parish yet sets out how the community wants to develop over the next few years and identifies the actions needed to help achieve this.

You will not be surprised to know that there is a general positive feeling about life in Dodderhill however there are also major concerns about development and traffic. This Plan will help make sure that all concerns are on everybody's agenda for action and help us to preserve all that is good about the parish.

The production of this Parish Plan means that everyone has had the opportunity to comment on how they would like the parish to develop. The process for producing the plan was initiated by the formation of an embryo Steering Group based on 6 Parish Councillors, who went on to arrange two public meetings, advertised via flyers to each household. These meetings were used to determine the issues important to the residents, for use as a basis for the parish survey, and to encourage additional people to join the Steering Group.

Happily we were able to swell the Steering Group to 13 people, the majority of who were not Parish Councillors – in accordance with government guidelines. Grants were sought from Awards for All, Community Champions and DEFRA for the funding of activities and a total of £4078 was spent, mostly on the printing.

Several months were spent designing the content of the household questionnaire, which was distributed in June 2006 to each of the 900+ households in the parish, either by hand or by post. The return rate was 40%, either via the pre-paid addressed envelopes supplied or one of several drop-boxes placed in key locations. In addition, many local businesses and service providers were contacted (e.g. Doctor's surgery) to gather opinions from a business perspective.

Following analysis of the household questionnaire returns, achieved using computer software designed for this purpose, additional Public Meetings

were arranged to provide feedback and establish priorities for the Action Plan.

In the Plan we have set out to consider local problems and opportunities, which were highlighted in the survey and others, which have been identified during the intervening period. Some statements in the Plan relate to issues that have moved on or been resolved during the period between the issue of the questionnaire and the production of the Plan. Its purpose is to set out a vision for the future development of our community and how that will be achieved. It:

- reflects the views of all sections of the community
- identifies features and local characteristics that people value
- identifies local needs and opportunities
- sets out a vision of how people want this community to develop in the future
- includes an Action Plan for achievement of this vision

The success of the Action Plan is dependent upon the commitment of all parties and will require further support from Parishioners, as well as Worcestershire County Council, Wychavon District Council, Dodderhill Parish Council, WCC Highways Partnership, West Mercia Police, Festival Housing Association and McDonalds.

The Steering Group would like to thank everyone who contributed to the production of this document and for their willingness in completing the questionnaire, without which the Plan could not have been produced

The Last 2000 Years

Dodderhill's history is one of a rural community that had a strong connection with salt production from Roman times into the 20th century and has been an important place for much of its history.

The earliest evidence of human activity discovered is preserved in Impney bog, north of the Hanbury Road, where there is rare evidence of early cultivation of cereals possibly going back into the Mesolithic period (8000-4000 BC).

The Romans saw Droitwich as an important strategic location. They built a very early temporary marching fort under what is now Roman Way to the east of Crutch Lane. They constructed a more permanent fort about AD 61 on Dodderhill itself, where St Augustine's church now stands, and up to three small Roman farmsteads existed along Crutch Lane.

There is no evidence of what happened after the Roman period, except that salt making continued. By AD 692 a Saxon "royal residence" existed called *Wicbald* - "great hall at/near Wic"; Wic was Droitwich. Royal charters were signed there by the Kings of Mercia who travelled round their kingdoms to collect revenues, dispense justice and feed their courts on the food stored at their estates. No doubt *Wicbald* was chosen due to the royal revenues from the salt industry. One of the greatest local mysteries is the location of this Saxon residence.

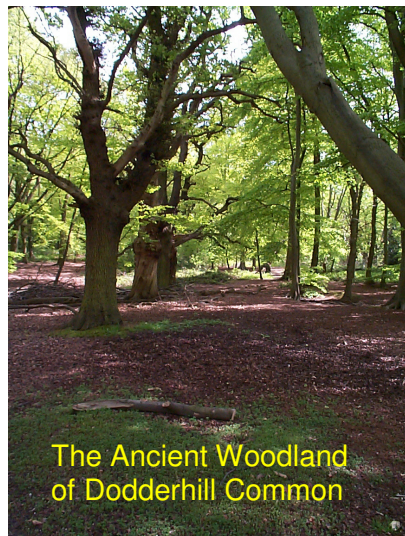
St Augustine's church on Dodderhill (not currently part of Dodderhill parish) was probably the site of an early Saxon Minster constructed in the late 600's from which priests went out to convert the local inhabitants. In AD 680 the local people, known as the Hwicce, adopted Christianity and their territory became the diocese of Worcester.

The networks of roads emanating from Droitwich were known as "Saltways" since salt was transported in all directions. The old Roman roads continued in use, including the main road through Wychbold. A piece of land in Wychbold was recorded as "The Toll" in medieval times where those transporting salt or fuel for making salt had to pay a toll.

The Domesday Book in 1086 records the estate of *Wicelbold*, certainly a continuation from the Saxon estate. Earl Godwin owned it, father of Earl Harold (killed at Hastings) and father-in-law of King Edward the Confessor. The Domesday book also cites a Court that could indicate the Saxon royal residence survived into the later 11th century. The strong association between Wychbold manor and the royally owned Droitwich salt industry shows the dominant position of Wychbold until the rise of Droitwich as a town.

The rest of Dodderhill parish would have been agricultural land with small settlements- those of medieval date included Rashwood, Astwood, Obden (possibly Hobden), Sagebury, Pipers Hill and Cassies (possibly Cashes Farm). A striking feature is that the Domesday Book records five mills in

the manor, the second largest concentration in the county in the 11th century. These would have been Saxon mills on the River Salwarpe used for grinding corn. Wychbold mill, Paper mill, Walk mill, Impney mill and the Droitwich town mill (a detached part of Dodderhill parish into the 19th century) may be the sites of these five mills. A sixth mill was recorded at Astwood in the 1100s but does not appear to have survived into the 1500's



The area of Crutch was administratively outside the Parish and paid no tithes. It was first recorded in the Domesday Book as being owned by the same lord who owned Wychbold, Osbern FitzRichard.

The Domesday manor of *Wicelbold* was subdivided into smaller manors. Large medieval timber-framed houses survive around Wychbold as witnesses to the area's farming prowess. These grew into major farming centres by the end of the Middle Ages. Prosperity continued during the 17th and 18th centuries as

more major farmhouses were built - Crutch Farm, Kingsland Hill Farm, the new Hobden Hall, Impney Farm, Withy Furlong Farm and Colley Pits Farm.

During the 19th century large houses were built as part of the Victorian gentrification of the countryside including Elm Court and Impney Mansions, now the Chateau Impney. This French chateau-style grand house with three lodges on the A38, set in its own park, was built by salt magnate John Corbett using the vast profits from the industrialisation of salt making at Stoke Prior.

Information provided by:-
Derek Hurst, Archaeologist, Worcestershire Historic Environment & Archaeology Service
Lyn Blewitt, Dodderhill Parish Survey Project Group

The Last 100 years

Dodderhill Parish is a rural area with the A38 in Wychbold at its centre. As described in the previous section, farms and manor houses have formed part of Wychbold for centuries. Local benefactors built many local landmarks, including St. Mary de Wyche Church, Vicarage, Rashwood School and the Corbett Homes for Retired Salt Workers. The principal people were the 'Salt King' John Corbett, who developed the biggest salt processing plant in Europe in neighbouring Stoke Prior, and the Amphlett family, who built the original Wychbold Hall.

In the early 1900s, along the meandering unpaved Worcester Road (A38),



could be found Wychbold Court, Poplar Cottages, Wychbold Garage, the Congregational Chapel, the Post Office, Robin Hood Public House, Rashwood School, the County Police Station, the Village Stores, the Crown Hotel with its outdoor heated swimming pool, a Blacksmith's shop and Webb's Trial Grounds.

In the early 1930s Worcestershire County Council (WCC) straightened, widened and asphalted the A38 at about the same time the BBC built the radio masts to broadcast wireless signals, enabling "Droitwich calling" to be heard across the land.

The single event that had the most dramatic impact, both environmentally and sociologically, came in 1960-62 when the M5 motorway was built through and to the west of Wychbold proper. Local landmarks were demolished to make way for the junction and a massive motorway bridge; the south and west of the village was cut off from the east. Dodderhill now had a transport infrastructure that enabled it (and its neighbours, e.g. Bromsgrove) to be easily accessed from all over the country. Dodderhill became a more popular place to live because of ease of commuting; commercial developments in areas nearby were also strategically placed to take advantage of the M5/A38.

A new First School was built in central Wychbold, Rashwood School having closed in 1971 after the building was declared unsafe. The original school was finally demolished in 1986 and replaced by a Little Chef restaurant and, subsequently, a Travelodge hotel to service the motorway trade.

In the 1990s commercial development began on the area immediately north of junction 5 and local opinion suggests that transport & environmental problems began to increase. McDonalds replaced the old 'Sunnyside' transport café and lorry park; the Holiday Inn Express hotel followed on the same site and Whitbread's obtained planning permission, on appeal, to build the 'Wych Way Inn' pub/restaurant. All these developments were strongly opposed by local people.

Webb's Garden Centre won awards and expanded into Britain's biggest garden centre, new industrial estates were developed in neighbouring Bromsgrove and transport-related amenities were also developed to cater for the increasing volume of traffic from both the M5 and the A38. These developments have impacted on Wychbold's village character by bringing noise, litter and increased volumes of fast vehicles, especially lorries, into the area..

Housing development has steadily continued decade-by-decade: - post-war Wychbold; 1960s and 1970s Stoke Prior (the Parish Boundary means that part of the west side of the village is in Dodderhill and not Stoke); School Road; the Pear Tree Way estate, Wychbold; Impney Farm (again, an outlying part of the Parish, probably associating itself more with it's Droitwich neighbours); the development of the old Wychbold Hall estate by Bloor and the most recent infill development at Salwarpe Close by Festival Housing. The post-war concrete flats, also owned by Festival Housing, have become run-down and difficult to let, bringing various social issues and consequently a fervent hope that they will be demolished and replaced with attractive affordable housing.

Recent housing developments, despite initial concerns from some quarters, have presented an opportunity to bring new blood and vibrancy to the community.

The Village Post Office survives, thanks to the Midlands News Store, which took over the post office duties and renamed the store "Wychbold Post Office".

Wychbold is classed as a 'sustainable village' because of the level of services from which it benefits (e.g. school, public transport, post office, shop)

Robin Skerratt, in his book "Memories of Wychbold before the Motorway", provides a fascinating record of recent local history covering much of the Parish and Wychbold in particular.

Results of the Survey

A Vision for the Future

In summary, not unreasonably, residents would like Dodderhill to be a Parish that:

- **Is Peaceful** - traffic slowed; motorway noise reduced; lorries no longer speeding through country lanes.
- **Is Safe** - a strong police presence keeping vandalism, drugs and anti-social behaviour under control; pedestrians able to cross roads safely and walk on pedestrian-friendly pavements.
- **Is Litter free** - clean; no litter strewn on pavements and in lanes
- **Is Green** - two beautified Village Greens with flowering bulbs, trees and benches; no parking on pavements; no further destruction of trees and hedges.
- **Preserves and enhances** - the surrounding Green Belt and environment.
- **Retains what remains of a village atmosphere** - new development restricted to those wanted by the community and in a style and density that fits the existing character; the two open green

field sites, restricted from development until 2011, returned to green belt and not developed.

- **Offers activities for youth** - a rebuilt Village Hall; volunteers/adults running a variety of community activities; working in partnership with the Police and youth organisation.

The Environment

The landscape which determines the character of the British countryside and the responsibility for its well-being, belongs to every one of us.

Farming has declined over recent years and only a small number remain as working farms.

Crops such as maize, rape and wheat are generally grown, as is grass for hay and haylage.



We are fortunate to have a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) at Dodderhill Common/Pipers Hill, containing some of the oldest and largest trees in the County. More than 200 species of fungi have been found, the spreading crowns of the trees providing ideal growing conditions.

Despite negative comments about development, residents recorded in the questionnaire how much they love Dodderhill. They want to preserve the surrounding green environment and improve the existing

developments by retaining what “*village feel*” they perceive they have left in Wychbold proper.

Green belt

Our questionnaire recorded that 98.5% wanted the green belt protected from development whilst 83% felt preservation of wildlife is “very important” to them; as were meadows and green fields (75%), ancient woodland (74%), trees (72%), canals (62%) and hedges (61%). Under recent legislation all hedges, other than those relating to domestic boundaries, are now protected. Many trees carry Tree Preservation Orders (TPO) and everyone should be vigilant in ensuring that any indication of tree or hedge removal is reported to WDC immediately. WDC should carefully consider any planning application that calls for removal of trees or hedges or is located in green belt.

Preserve and enhance the natural environment

Beyond the built environment, Dodderhill residents show a strong feeling for the quality of the natural environment and hostility towards those who destroy it. They want it both preserved and better maintained.

Residents want WCC and WDC to do a better job of looking after certain elements of the environment. 48% thought WCC and WDC did a “poor” job between them of maintaining the verges, grass cutting (41%), pavements (39%) and roads (37%). 73% thought the environment could be improved through a reduction in traffic and speed - this encompassed noise and atmospheric pollution as well as safety.

Make Dodderhill a nicer and safer place to walk and cycle

Particularly within central Wychbold, residents would like to walk and cycle but experience difficulties. They requested improvements for pedestrians (66%) and cyclists (51%), wheelchair users (45%) and pushchair users (30%). Since one of the issues is pavement parking, 62% want the Police to assist in its prevention (see Transport & Road Safety). 48% would like to see an improvement in the condition and maintenance of pavements, and an increase in suitable pedestrian crossings (54%) and dropped kerbs (42%).

Improve Wychbold's two Village Greens

Residents would like to make the Greens into the village centre and see improvements with massive plantings of flowering bulbs (37%), trees (51%) and the installation of benches (31%).



Availability of seating is important since children use the Village Greens as a play area.

Residents hope Festival Housing Association will support this request by granting their permission and that funding can be obtained via sponsorship or a grant application.

The Parish Council should ensure that both Greens are registered as Village Greens under the Commons Act 2006 since they have been used for lawful sports for at least 20 years. One Village Green is owned by Festival Housing Association, the other by Wychavon District Council.

Public Rights of Way (PROW)

Outside Wychbold, on countryside public rights of way, walkers have identified various problems that could potentially be resolved - overgrowth and nettles (46%); lack of signposts and way-marking (32%); barbed wire (22%); poorly maintained stiles (20%) and crops across and obstructing paths (20%).

A resident has generously volunteered his time to become Dodderhill's Parish Path Warden, an unpaid position. He will survey and draw up plans to clear footpaths and bridleways, where authorised by WCC to do so, and assist the Parish Council in seeking funding from the WCC Parish Paths Partnership to pay for specific improvements. This will go in hand with the Parish Lengthsman, paid for by WCC, to keep signs clean and drains unblocked.

Litter and McDonald's

75% of respondents want an active effort against litter and rubbish and most of them felt that McDonald's clients were the biggest culprits. McDonald's litter is discarded from cars and lorries for miles around; few Dodderhill lanes are unaffected.

The District Councillor and the Parish Council could potentially meet with McDonald's to communicate to them the strength of feeling of residents and that the Parish wants them to be pro-active and regularly clean up their litter, especially between the M5 roundabout and 'The Crown'; provision of additional litter bins throughout the Parish, funded by McDonald's, would be helpful.

Additional environmental problems & potential solutions

Dog waste: the Parish Council should install more dog waste bins if suitable sites can be identified.

Green Waste: WDC collects green waste but this goes to landfill and not recycling; WDC to be asked to explore the possibilities of recycling.

Fly tipping: Residents should report anyone fly-tipping to WDC via the WDC HUB "Report It" website or via the Civic Centre telephone number.

Development and Planning

Compared with other parts of the district, Dodderhill seems to have had more than its fair share of development in the last 20 years, consequently 72% of respondents were strongly opposed to any further development (housing or of any kind). Development in such close proximity to Junction 5 of the M5 Motorway is perceived as encouraging a “commuter belt” whereby people would make use of the road/motorway infrastructure to live in Dodderhill but commute to work in nearby cities (Birmingham, Worcester, Gloucester etc.). If building continues at its recent pace, residents believe Dodderhill could coalesce into a suburb of Droitwich or Bromsgrove, connected by ribbon development. They believe they need a breathing space to come to terms with the pace of change that has taken place in their community and want to retain the “*rural feel*” and the open green space they have left.

Replace the flats in DeWyche Road

The DeWyche Road flats sit prominently overlooking the Wychbold village greens and have a visual impact on all the other houses that surround the greens; Festival Housing owns both the flats and the larger of the two greens. Residents want Festival Housing to demolish the flats, which are perceived as an “*eyesore*”, and replace them with attractively designed bungalows and semi-detached housing for sale/rent to local people.

As tenants of the flats have limited off-street parking, vehicles are parked on the road, on the Village Green, on pavements and in front of driveways. For any future developments, and in line with the request to WDC/PO, Festival is requested to include two off-street parking places in plans for each house/flat.

Since the questionnaires were completed, plans are being developed for the 3 blocks of flats to be replaced by terraced housing and three-storey flats with off-street parking. The completion of the Salwarpe Close (previously Chez Nous) development has enabled Festival to move residents from one block of flats into this new development.

Protect the Parish from further development.

69% do not want the two remaining green fields to be developed; currently both are “restrained from development until 2011”. The 22 acres bounded by M5, Crown Lane and A38 was moved into potential development in 1991 and residents want this site to be protected and returned to green belt. Residents do not want the 25 acres on Church Lane to be developed either, one of the reasons being that it suffers from poor drainage.

When asked what kind of non-housing development, if any, people would like to see encouraged in Dodderhill, tourism development and job creation received the most positive response (33-38% in favour). The other options received a much more negative response (having a ratio of approximately 2:1 against) with retail/shops 47%: 26% and small business development with 52%: 24.7%. By far the most emotive was more restaurants/pubs/hotels or small-scale industrial workshops with a massive 65.5% against and only 10% in favour.

Residents appreciate that Webb's Garden Centre is a major local employer and their expansion is beautifully done. However, they would have serious reservations about further expansion as they believe it would contribute to a further increase in coach, lorry and car traffic.

The only developments to receive a positive reaction from residents are for residential care for people with disabilities (43%) and sheltered housing (41%).

No development in areas at risk of surface water and storm drainage

Flooding problems was a mandatory question included by the software used to generate and analyse the questionnaire. Since the survey was taken prior to July 2007, and the devastating damage caused by the heavy rain throughout Worcestershire (in which 5 properties along the Salwarpe were badly flooded), the results might be different if the question was asked again.

80% of respondents said they either have no problems with flooding or had no opinion. 15% (50 households) reported that they had “few problems” whilst 3% (10 households) selected the “many problems” option.



When asked where these problems occurred, almost all related to roads and junctions along the valley floor of the River Salwarpe. Hotspots included Astwood Lane (Stoke Prior), Stoke Road/Shaw Lane, Church Lane, Chequers Lane/East Close, Papermill Lane, Colley Pits Lane, Crown Lane, Brine

Pits Lane, Walkmills Drive and Ford Lane.

Houses along the A38, which sit below road level, also suffer in places. 6 respondents reported that water floods or waterlogs their gardens and one resident reported that run-off water from the A38 had flooded their house.

For the future, it seems unwise to develop in any location subject to waterlogging or where flooding occurs, even if it is not officially designated as a flood plain. The 25-acre field in Church Lane falls into this category.

Drains and culverts associated with roads should be kept clear by WCC/HP although the Parish employs the Parish Lengthsman to clear any that are within his remit (within the Health & Safety rules). However, WCC/HP could help the situation greatly if they would enact measures to deter traffic, especially large vehicles, from using the lanes as “rat runs”. These vehicles widen the roads by destroying verges and clogging ditches, both these being features that naturally assist in handling water run-off.

Residents who do experience domestic flooding should report it to WDC so that the extent of any problems can be measured.

A planning system that listens to local views

54% of residents do not understand how the Planning System works whilst 40% believe they understand the process but are dissatisfied with the way it operates.

Their dissatisfaction potentially stems from the developments they believe were forced upon them, despite local objections. McDonald's, the Wych Way Inn and Salwarpe Close (formerly Chez Nous) are all developments to which many residents objected but where they feel their opinions was disregarded. A typical comment was that Dodderhill was suffering from “*‘predatory developers’ who pushed in unwanted development, using Wychbold as a dumping ground*”.

The Parish Council can help by providing an up-to-date and clear description of how the planning system works. This is published on the parish community website, including a link to the WDC/PO site. This may also help with managing the expectations of people, which may be far higher than is allowed by planning law. The Parish Council and residents are only consultees in the process whilst decisions are primarily based on Government Planning Policy.

Government Policy sets the timescales for consultation on Planning Applications. However WDC might improve the situation by quickly sending out letters notifying immediate neighbours about local planning applications. While people going through the planning process would like consultation timescales shortened, their neighbours however would like more time to find out about planning applications and express a view.

While residents appreciate WDC are the planning authority and have the final say in planning matters, they would like the planning system to be more resident-friendly.

Transport and Road Safety

There is no doubt we now live in the age of the motor vehicle. Dodderhill lies at the centre of a highway infrastructure and it has become increasingly unlikely that people both live and work in the same immediate area since commuting is more feasible than ever before. People commuting between the motorway and/or principal places of education or employment heavily use all our Parish roads, both main roads and back lanes, especially during peak periods.

Car ownership has also increased with one car per adult now commonplace as opposed to one car per household. Over 89% of households recorded that the car was their major means of transport with an average of 1.5 private vehicles for every household.

Improve safety on the A38

Dodderhill is bisected by the A38 and there is a high volume of traffic, of all kinds, in both directions, much of it perceived to be travelling at speed. Safety concerns have been expressed about vehicular traffic issues (volume and/or speed, vehicles trying to access the A38) and pedestrians (lack of crossings). Residents reported that this traffic goes on 24 hours a day, one resident commenting “*shaking the windows of the house*”.

93% said they experience problems getting onto the A38. Residents want WCC/HP to improve road safety at the A38 junctions with Chequers Lane (65%), Crown Lane (38%), Church Lane (38%) and Centurion Way (28%) and also the Chequers Lane junction with Stoke Road (54%).

71% are concerned about the speed of traffic on the A38; currently 50 and 40 mph. 67% want Highways to reduce the speed limit to 30 mph and to install radar-driven flashing speed signs in the hopes that slower traffic would make the A38 safer and easier to access.

The volume and speed of traffic can make it difficult and unsafe for pedestrians to cross the A38. Two locations have been identified where aids could be installed by WCC/HP:

A pelican crossing adjacent to 'The Crown' pub: This is the site of a staggered road junction with bus stops on both side of the road and 'The Poplars' sheltered housing complex on one corner. It would increase

safety for school children and the elderly alighting from buses and create an opportunity for traffic to safely join the main road from Crown Lane or Chequers Lane.

A refuge in the vicinity of Little Chef/Robin Hood Pub: Again, there are bus stops on both sides of the road and it might also provide a buffer for vehicles trying to join the A38 from Rashwood.

Reduce motorway noise

72% of residents are affected by noise from the M5 motorway, both day and night, and want measures taken to reduce it. Some believe that the number of trees removed from the old Wychbold Hall site have made the noise worse.

The Highways Agency has promised Peter Luff MP in 2007 that there are plans to deal with the noise within 5 years but this is considered an unacceptable timescale and residents, many of whom have been complaining for years, feel action should be taken now. Serious consideration should be given to obtaining an independent acoustic survey, for which funding would be necessary.

Constrain lorries from using unsuitable roads

53% believe that lorries, often guided by satellite navigation systems, are contributing to traffic problems by using roads unsuitable for HGV's as “*rat runs*” in and around Wychbold. This includes Chequers Lane, Church Lane and Astwood Lanes (both Wychbold & Stoke Prior) Discussions with Police and WCC/HP need to take place about potential solutions, which might include;
A one-way priority system on Chequers Lane and Church Lane:
A weight limit on Astwood Lane, Stoke Prior and better signage on both Astwood Lanes.

Protect the children attending Wychbold First School

Inside Wychbold (away from the A38), a 30 mph speed limit exists but a 20 mph limit should be introduced on School Road between the Surgery and the First School to protect the schoolchildren.

Improve safety on outlying roads and country lanes

Speeding is perceived to be occurring on all roads and the existence of the motorway junction results in a great deal of traffic traversing the Parish from outlying areas across our network of country lanes. These lanes have no pavements and are becoming too dangerous to use other than by motor vehicle. Vehicles passing each other, often at speed, are also damaging the verges and ditches, as the lanes get 'wider'.

Outside Wychbold village the speed limit is generally the National Speed Limit (60 mph on single carriageway roads). Residents would like to see this reduced to 40 mph on Stoke Road /Shaw Lane, Astwood Lane and Crutch Lane.

Non-residents' vehicles being parked in the access road from the roundabout often restrict access to the Bloor estate. Once the roads are complete and have been adopted, residents are keen to have this road marked with double-yellow lines, and offenders ticketed, so that residents and emergency vehicles can safely negotiate into and out of the estate.

Improve safety on the M5 Junction 5 roundabouts.

Residents believe the M5 junction is unsafe. WCC/HP in conjunction with the Highways Agency should review and potentially redesign the traffic management on the M5 slip-roads and roundabouts to:-

Allow safe access into and out of the Bloor estate.

Introduce measures on the M5 slip roads to eliminate the backlog (sometimes onto the motorway proper) of traffic waiting to turn right.

Reclaim pavements for pedestrians

Due to lack of off-street parking in certain areas, it is not surprising that 30% of residents reported that vehicles, particularly around the Village Greens, are parking on the pavements; 20% said parked vehicles block their entrances. Residents want to reclaim the pavements for pedestrian safety and to encourage walking.

One or more methods of parking control should be introduced and offenders should be ticketed. Suggestions are:- "No parking on pavement" signs; parking areas painted onto the road where the road is wide enough for both parking and free movement of traffic; trees planted at intervals along the roadside to deter parking where pavement/verge is wide enough. Most importantly residents want a more visible Police

presence; WDC should ensure all future applications for development include two off-road parking spaces.

44% want better maintained pavements, particularly for pushchair and wheel chair users, since pavements are uneven and overgrown.

Increase use of public transport/buses

Whilst only 10% of the respondents currently rely on the bus for their main means of transport, 47% are receptive to using them especially as free bus passes are available to people over age 60.



However, if WCC wishes to increase bus usage in order to reduce traffic, residents would want them to make improvements to unsatisfactory timetables (50%) and reliability (46%).

An increase in the number of bus shelters was also desirable (40%), this being the responsibility of the Parish Council.

Safety and Policing

Residents believe Wychbold's "job culture" has intensified during the past 15 years. The increase in housing has potentially increased the number of young people within and around the Village who seem to have nothing to do. Older people expressed concern when the bored youths congregated around the village. The recent attempt by adults and young people to create a Youth Club for teenagers failed when intimidation caused the adults to withdraw their support.

Visible police presence with zero tolerance of vandalism, drugs, crime, litter and unacceptable behaviour

Most residents were horrified at the damage caused to the Village Hall by local vandals, some describing it as "disgraceful" and turning it into what one resident described as "a bomb site".

To stop this downward spiral, 73% of respondents want a visible Police presence with strict law enforcement "to reclaim the community for the majority of decent people with respect for others and property." Residents want zero tolerance of vandalism, drugs, crime, litter and unacceptable behaviour.

Residents asked for consultations with Police (59%) and more activities for young people (61%). However, there is a need for adults to volunteer their time to run these activities for young people.

The Parish Council invited the West Mercia Police Wychavon Geographic Commander, responsible for day-to-day policing in the Wychbold area, to their August 2006 meeting. The Inspector was appalled by the extent of the damage to the Village Hall and gave assurances he would take a personal interest in the policing of Wychbold. Vandalism has dropped significantly since a new Beat Officer was appointed, assisted by a Community Liaison Officer. CCTV cameras have been fitted around the Village Hall and the Police presence around the village has improved significantly.

The Beat Officer has been asked to attend the Parish Council's monthly meetings (normally the second Monday of every month, 19:30) to inform the Council about his progress and any problems he encounters.

Residents with problems could attend Parish Council meetings to voice their concerns. The Parish Council could also include the Beat Officer's reports in the monthly Community Links and publish it on the website, so that the wider Parish is kept informed



Constable Brian Cheshire from the "Local Policing Team" liaising with Parish Councillor Stuart Miller

Street lighting

School Road and Chapel Mews are areas with a degree of notoriety as a 'hang out' or meeting place thus discouraging many residents from passing through them at night. 34% of respondents would like yellow 'dusk to dawn' environmentally sensitive street lighting installed, this being the responsibility of WCC. Another area where lighting is wanted to improve safety is the School Road car park; this is the responsibility of Festival Housing Association.

Communications

66% of residents believe the amount of information they receive about Dodderhill Parish is “good/reasonable” while 25% thought it “poor”. The response probably reflects where the resident lives. The Parish Council understands that the Community Link magazine no longer reaches all residents; the Link is a church publication delivered to their parishioners and Dodderhill is now larger than that area. Residents in Impney, Ford Lane, Crutch Lane and parts of Crown Lane do not receive a monthly copy and therefore no direct communication from the Parish Council.

Improve communications

When asked how communications could be improved, a slightly higher number of residents wanted an expanded Community Link magazine (55%) or a newly created parish magazine (54%) than wanted a community website (42%). 14% would like additional notice boards over and above the two currently outside the Wychbold Post Office and the Surgery.

63% of residents reported that they now have access to the Internet at home. As this number is likely to grow and the design and hosting of the Dodderhill Community website (www.dodderhillandwychbold.org.uk) has been donated, this is a low-cost option and the Parish Council should expand the information on the website. Volunteers are needed to provide topical information to the administrator who will then keep the site up to date.

Post boxes sited in the most popular locations

Residents would like reinstatement of the post box that was stolen from outside 'The Poplars' on Chequers Lane. They also want, as seems logical, a post box placed outside the new Wychbold Post Office, even if it means removing the one from outside the old Post Office location.

All areas of Dodderhill Parish to be represented on the Parish Council

In an ideal world, it may be most appropriate for the Parish Council to consist of councillors representing all areas of Dodderhill. DPC currently has 9 councillors representing various parts of central Wychbold and a total of 4 covering the whole of Astwood (east), Rashwood (south), Crown Lane, Brine Pits Lane, Crutch Lane and Ford Lane (west). There are no councillors representing Stoke Prior or Impney.

Vacancies do occur from time to time and are published in the 'Community Link' magazine and are posted to the two notice boards. Anyone interested in a vacancy should contact the Parish Clerk (details on the inside cover).

Parish Council Promise: An Annual Report

Through the questionnaire and this plan, residents are asking numerous local organisations (e.g. Wychavon District Council, Worcestershire County Council, WCC Highways Partnership, Dodderhill Parish Council, West Mercia Police, McDonald's and Festival Housing Association) to help solve the serious problems facing Dodderhill Parish.

The Parish Plan Steering Group promises that all of these organisations will receive a copy of this plan and will be made aware of the specific actions wanted by residents. The Parish Council promises to mail a written update to all residents in one year's time on any changes and progress made/not made.

Leisure and Amenities

Dodderhill Parish is fortunate in that it owns a Village Hall and a large piece of open space, adjacent to the Village Hall, available for anyone to use. It contains several items of play equipment, football pitches, a netball court, acres of grass and trees and a brand new children's play area built for the under-12s.

There are several thriving football teams, able to make use of the changing facilities at the Hall. The Hall is also used as a meeting place by various organisations such as the Parish Council, WI etc. but what seems to be lacking is any kind of indoor activity for young people or regular social events for the whole community.

In 2005-06 the Parish Council, along with volunteers from the Parish, obtained a £1000 grant to buy new sports equipment and tried to restart a Youth Club. This effort failed when local youth intimidated volunteers until they believed it was not safe for them to continue.

The Village Hall

The original brick-built Hall was built in the 1960s to replace the previous wooden structure in Crown Lane. The funding came from local fund-raising and grant-aid. Sadly, the Hall needs major investment to bring it up to current-day standards.

Following a further spate of incidents caused by local vandals, the Village Hall sat with many of its windows boarded up and graffiti on its walls. It was also burgled and all the curtains ruined. These were replaced at great expense, and the interior of the Hall decorated, simply so that the Hall could continue to be used and generate some income to cover its running costs.

The alternative was to close the Hall completely but there would also have been financial implications in doing so. The Parish Council voted to take on the management of the Hall, on a temporary basis, and seek funding to extend and upgrade the facilities in order to create a proper Community Centre that people would want to use.

An application has been made for lottery funding to cover the cost of this.

46% of people recorded they had not visited the Wychbold Village Hall in the past 12 months; 39% had only visited it once or twice, most probably to vote or attend a Community Meeting.



"We go elsewhere for social events" was the box ticked by 48% and *"none of the current activities interest us"* was ticked by 45%. However, in the written section of the questionnaire, residents explained that they did not use the Village Hall because they did not believe it was "safe."

Residents appear to be in favour of restoring the Hall if it could be made into a safe, attractive centre holding the right activities.

49-56% said they would attend community meetings and social events.

Section 106 Agreements - Funding

Whenever a housing development goes ahead, the developer has to make contributions to a community fund (referred to as '106 funding') based on the size of the development. This fund is administered by WDC and can only be used to enhance public open space. The Pear Tree Way and Bloor Estates were no exception.

The Parish Council used £22,000 of these funds for a new children's playground and a further £15,000 to install a CCTV camera system around the Village Hall and playground to protect the whole area from crime-related activities such as vandalism.

Further '106 Funding' will be available and possible uses will be further development of the area around the Village Hall, regeneration of Parish allotments and the enhancement of the Greens.

Volunteers needed

The questionnaire recorded that 45% of people felt there were no social facilities available in Dodderhill for those under the age of 60 whilst 61% want activities for young people, an active Youth Club and Sports Clubs so youngsters have somewhere to meet and play after school hours.

There was interest in the provision of holiday play schemes (44%), after school clubs (39%) and adult education evening classes (58%).

All these activities need a building in which to hold them and adults to volunteer to run them. Whilst the Parish Council is working to upgrade the Hall and keep it open, activities cannot take place without the help and support of Dodderhill residents.

The Parish desperately needs a new generation of volunteers, both men and women, to come forward and get involved in the organisation of much needed clubs and facilities :

- Parish Council
- Village Hall Committee
- Scouts and Guides
- Playgroups
- Youth clubs

- Sports clubs
- social events
- community meetings
- and the community website.

Large numbers of adults are particularly needed to organise and run youth activities for children.

A partnership between adults/parents and the Police could be formed to ensure that efforts are not thwarted by the anti-social behaviour of a minority element. Nothing will change unless, and until, residents get involved.

Both the District and County Councils have teams whose function is to facilitate activities for young people. Their help and expertise will also be utilised if and when volunteers come forward.

Communities with a vibrant spirit are those that offer a wide range of activities for the whole family. They are nice places to live and raise children; they make you feel as if you belong. A community is only as good as the residents who are involved.

Please volunteer and get involved.



Health and Education



Ann Taylor and Vicky Everton in the pharmacy at the Wychbold Surgery

It appears that Dodderhill's residents are relatively healthy in as much as, with the exception of the use of GP services, 75% of people had not used any of the medical/social services listed in the survey during the last year.

The General Practice Surgery itself was rated "good" by 69% and "reasonable" by 12% and considering 15% had not had cause to visit a Doctor in the last year, this should be considered an excellent rating.

Dodderhill Parish has no secondary schools or colleges. Wychbold First School, which experienced some difficulties a few years ago, has been turned around and is now thriving and exceeding Education Authority standards - a recent OFSTED examination placed it at 'borderline outstanding'.



Wychbold First School IT room.

It has a broad, balanced and stimulating curriculum to meet individual's needs; offers free musical instrument tuition at Key Stage 2; includes a funded Nursery as part of its Foundation Stage Unit; has achieved 'Healthy School' status and has outdoor play provision, a Forest School and a PC Network.

This Plan can do no more but report on the excellent job that is being done by everyone involved.

Glossary & Contacts

Dodderhill Community Website	http://www.dodderhillandwychbold.org.uk/
DPC	Dodderhill Parish Council
NSL	National Speed Limit
Police	West Mercia Police
PPW	Parish Paths Warden ppw@dodderhillparishcouncil.org.uk
PROW	Public Right of Way
TPO	Tree Preservation Order
WCC	Worcestershire County Council Tel: 01905 763763
WCC HUB	The internet mechanism used by WCC for central management of information and recording of issues. http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/
WCC/HP	Worcestershire County Council Highways Partnership
WDC	Wychavon District Council Tel: 01386 565000
WDC HUB	The internet mechanism used by WDC for central management of information and recording of issues. http://www.wychavon.whub.org.uk/ Tel: 01386 565015
WDC/PO	Wychavon District Council Planning Office

Action Plan

The conclusion to the Parish Plan requires an Action Plan to summarise the issues that will need to be taken forward for more detailed investigation and consideration. The success of the Parish Plan will be wholly dependent on the motivation and support of Dodderhill Parishioners as further volunteers will be needed to form Working Groups to tackle the issues head-on and progress the Action Plans. Please help, if you can, to make the Parish Plan a reality and something we can all be proud of.

Action Plan Priorities were determined at the public meetings and continuous feedback on the Action Plan will be provided to the local community via the Community Links, Annual Report and Dodderhill Community website (www.dodderhillandwychbold.org.uk).

Starting from the time the Parish Plan is published the timescales on Priorities are: HIGH = within 12 months, MEDIUM = within 2 years, LOW = within 3 years

The Environment

Goal	How it will be tackled	By Whom	Priority	Status
Preserve & enhance the environment	Ensure that Planning Policy and Local Plan adoption protects the Greenbelt from all development	Parish Council with WDC/PO	MEDIUM	Continuous
Preserve & enhance the environment	Ensure that Planning Policy and Local Plan adoption protects trees, woodlands, green fields and wildlife from all development.	Parish Council with WDC/PO	MEDIUM	Continuous
Prevent trees and hedges from being removed unnecessarily	Support local planning policy that aims to protect trees and hedges. Seek volunteers from within the Parish to act as Tree Wardens. Request a list of all TPOs from WDC and monitor their wellbeing via the Tree Warden. Carry out a survey to ensure that all ancient and/or important trees are considered for TPOs. Carry out a survey of ancient hedgerows to assess their age and biodiversity.	Local residents, Parish Council and WDC/PO	MEDIUM - HIGH	Continuous
Improve maintenance of verges and grassed areas	Liaise with WDC to improve grass cutting and maintenance of verges – frequency & removal of cuttings.	Parish Council with WDC	HIGH	
Improve Maintenance - road cleaning & drain clearance	Lobby for improvement in the unblocking of drains on which the Parish Lengthsman is not allowed to work since flooding is detrimental to verge upkeep.	Parish Council with WCC/HP	MEDIUM	

Goal	How it will be tackled	By Whom	Priority	Status
Improve Public Rights of Way	Obtain funding from Parish Paths Partnership to resolve specific problems with footpaths and bridleways identified via the Parish Paths Warden.	WCC Countryside Service in conjunction with PPW	LOW	
Ensure legal protection of Public Open Space	Investigate the possibility of registering the two Village Greens under the Commons Act 2006.	Parish Council	HIGH	
Improve the Village Greens	Obtain permission from land-owners; Obtain funding; Arrange for planting of flowering bulbs and trees and installation of benches.	Parish Council in conjunction with WDC & Festival Housing	MEDIUM	
Encourage walking rather than using a car (for short journeys)	Lobby WCC/HP to :- repair uneven and overgrown pavements. Install dropped kerbs and pedestrian crossings for pedestrians, push chair and wheel chair users. Improve pavement maintenance.	Parish Council with WCC/HP	MEDIUM	
Keep environment clean with improved litter management	Liaise with McDonald's for regular litter picks between M5 roundabout High and Crown Pub; encourage local businesses to donate litter bins to be installed throughout Dodderhill	Parish Council and WDC in conjunction with McDonald's	HIGH	
Keep environment clean with improved dog-waste management.	Install additional dog waste bins	Parish Council and WDC	MEDIUM	
General environmental improvements.	Continue to employ the Parish Lengthsman to clean signs, unblock drains, clear overgrown footpaths/verges and carry out general improvements.	Parish Council	HIGH	Continuous
Increase recycling of green waste.	Encourage WDC to recycle green waste - collection could be diverted from landfill to recycling.	Parish Council with WDC	HIGH	
Clean up the Parish	Publicise how to report fly tipping to WDC "Report a Problem" website (www.wychavon.gov.uk), Tel: 01386 565015	Parish Council, WDC & Residents	HIGH	

Development and Planning

Goal	How it will be tackled	By Whom	Priority	Status
Protect open space	Engage with WDC Planning Department to discuss planning designations and possible developments. Lobby to prevent development of open green field on Church Lane and have it reclassified as Greenbelt. Lobby to prevent development of open green field along A38/Crown Lane and have it reclassified as Greenbelt.	Parish Council/WDC/PO	MEDIUM	
Make the Planning process more resident-friendly.	Encourage WDC to notify all neighbours with timely letters about local planning applications.	WDC/PO	LOW	
Manage Expectations (Planning)	Publish details of how the process works on the Dodderhill Community website.	Parish Council in conjunction with WebMaster	HIGH	Complete
Increase availability of off-road parking	Encourage WDC/PO to critically review all applications for housing development, to include at least two off-road parking places for each house/flat.	WDC/PO	MEDIUM	
Provide for the needs of residents who are older or have a disability	Support WDC/PO in allowing development of local residential care/ sheltered housing.	WDC/PO, Festival Housing Association	LOW	
Limit 'ribbon development' and preserve the character of the area.	Resist further large scale housing developments, private or affordable, except for housing infill.	WDC/PO	HIGH	
Preserve the integrity and character of the Parish.	Draw up a "Design Statement" that describes components of an acceptable street landscape (e.g. buildings not more than 2 stories in height). Ensure density and character of infill development is in keeping with the density and character of the Parish including the density assignment of 'Rural' as opposed to 'Town'. Resist development of additional fast-food restaurants, chain pubs, hotels, industrial workshops and any further expansion of Webb's Garden Centre.	WDC/PO	HIGH	
Create an 'identity' for Wychbold so that people traversing the A38 feel that they actually are 'somewhere'	Consider marking the A38 boundaries with :- Flowers in tubs. Half-gates on verges either side of the road.	Parish Council in conjunction with WCC/HP (restrictions exist for work on the A38).	MED	

Transport and Road Safety

Goal	How it will be tackled	By Whom	Priority	Status
Improve A38 road safety	Campaign to reduce A38 speed limit to 30 mph through the village and install radar-driven flashing speed signs.	Parish Council in conjunction with WCC/HP	HIGH	
Assist in safe crossing of the A38 adjacent to 'The Crown'	Encourage installation of a pelican crossing or traffic lights outside the Crown Pub on A38 to protect the people, especially schoolchildren & the elderly, as they alight from buses.	Parish Council in conjunction with WCC/HP	HIGH	
Assist in safe crossing of the A38 adjacent to Rashwood	Negotiate for installation of a refuge in the vicinity of Robin Hood Pub/Little Chef.	Parish Council in conjunction with WCC/HP	MEDIUM	
Reduce motorway noise	Lobby for Installation of fencing and/or resurfacing of M5 as it passes through Dodderhill.	Parish Council in conjunction with MP and Highways Agency	HIGH	
Reduce motorway noise	Consider an independent acoustic survey, obtain funding for same.	Parish Council in conjunction with MP and Highways Agency	HIGH	
Improve road safety on M5 Junction 5 roundabouts.	Encourage introduction of measures on the M5 slip-roads to eliminate the peak-time back-log (sometimes onto the motorway proper) of traffic waiting to turn right. Lobby for provision of safe ingress and egress for Bloor estate.	Highways Agency & WCC/HP	MEDIUM	
Deter lorries from using unsuitable roads.	Negotiate for installation of a one-way priority system on both Chequers Lane and Church Lane to deter heavy/large vehicles using the lanes as "rat runs" though Wychbold.	WCC/HP	MEDIUM	
Deter lorries from using unsuitable roads.	Lobby for a weight limit on Astwood Lane, Stoke Prior.	WCC/HP	MEDIUM	
Deter lorries from using unsuitable roads.	Encourage better signage on all roads unsuitable for large vehicles	WCC/HP	HIGH	
Deter lorries from using unsuitable roads.	Encourage removal of the signpost on the A38 that identifies Chequers Lane as a route to Hanbury.	WCC/HP	HIGH	
Improve road safety on lanes outside Wychbold	Lobby for a reduction in the speed limit from NSL to 40 mph on Shaw Lane, Astwood Lane(s), Stoke Road and Crutch Lane.	WCC/HP	MEDIUM	
Prevent vehicles parking at the entrance to Bloor estate	Negotiate for provision of double yellow lines.	WCC/HP	HIGH	

Goal	How it will be tackled	By Whom	Priority	Status
Improve road safety adjacent to Wychbold First School	Lobby for a reduction in the speed limit to 20 mph on School Lane between Surgery and First School. Negotiate for "Slow down, Children" signs.	WCC/HP	HIGH	
Deter parking on pavements	Encourage installation of "No Parking on Pavement" signs and/or paint parking bays and/or plant trees around the Village Greens so that parking on pavements becomes difficult.	WCC/HP	MEDIUM	
Encourage use of Public Transport	Negotiate for better and readable timetables at bus stops and more reliable bus service.	WCC	MEDIUM	
Encourage use of Public Transport	Provide additional bus shelters; maintain existing bus shelters.	Parish Council	LOW	
Discourage illegal parking & Improve road safety	Encourage West Mercia Police to ticket illegally parked vehicles especially on pavements in Wychbold; in the bus stop lay-by on A38; at entrance to Bloor Estate (if lines are installed).	West Mercia Police	HIGH	
Raise awareness that development in Bromsgrove has an impact on traffic	Set up a dialogue with neighbouring Parish of Stoke so that DPC and WDC are aware of developments in Bromsgrove that might impact on traffic through Dodderhill.	Parish Council	HIGH	

Safety and Policing

Goal	How it will be tackled	By Whom	Priority	Status
Improve public safety & reduce fear of crime.	Encourage West Mercia Police to adopt :- a strategy of Visible Police Presence. zero tolerance policy towards vandalism, drug use, crime, litter and unacceptable behaviour.	West Mercia Police	HIGH	
Raise visibility of policing	Request Police Beat Officer to provide verbal report at monthly Parish Council Meeting, PC to include report in Community Links magazine.	West Mercia Police and Parish Council	HIGH	
Improve public safety & deter loitering	Lobby for installation of dawn to dusk yellow environmentally sensitive street lighting on School Road and Chapel Mews	WCC	MEDIUM	
Improve public safety & reduce fear of crime.	Lobby for installation of street lighting in School Road car park	Festival Housing Association	MEDIUM	

Communications

Goal	How it will be tackled	By Whom	Priority	Status
Improve communication with Residents	Expand the Dodderhill Community website. Encourage volunteers to provide the information.	Dodderhill Residents	HIGH	
Improve communication with Residents	Write and post an Annual Report to all households.	Parish Council	HIGH	
Re-instate Post box	Lobby for reinstatement of the post box outside Poplars on Chequers Lane.	Parish Council in conjunction with Royal Mail	HIGH	
Install Post box	Encourage Royal Mail to install a post box outside new Post Office.	Parish Council in conjunction with Royal Mail	HIGH	

Leisure and Amenities

Goal	How it will be tackled	By Whom	Priority	Status
Obtain funding for an improved Community Centre	Obtain lottery funding to restore/modernise Village Hall.	Parish Council	HIGH	
Build an improved Community Centre	Restore the Village Hall to be a safe/attractive community centre in which to hold youth activities and community meetings.	Parish Council	MEDIUM	
Create a better Community spirit	Encourage Residents to volunteer to join the Parish Council and Village Hall Committee.	Parish Council	HIGH	
Provide activities for children and teenagers	Seek adults to volunteer to run/organise youth activities	Dodderhill Residents	HIGH	
Seek assistance from Youth Organisations	Contact organisations who can assist in the setting up and running of activities for young people.	WCC in conjunction with Parish Council	HIGH	
Re-instate the Parish Allotments	Investigate funding for land clearance and fencing so that the old, overgrown allotments can be re-instated.	Parish Council	MEDIUM	Ongoing

